

last thirty years toward philanthropic work. In addition to her work with over 50 nonprofits such as Garvan Woodland Gardens, The Arkansas Rice Depot, and the Hot Springs Documentary Film Festival, she spends much her time on children and teenagers with organizations like Youth Ranches, THEA Foundation, and multiple other educational programs.

Morris also co-founded the Hot Springs Giving Circle with Don Munro, a fellow Hot Springs citizen, with the effort of dispersing funds to numerous local organizations. She additionally started the Morris Foundation with her late husband, Walter.

Her induction into the Arkansas Women's Hall of Fame speaks to her incredible influence on the people of our state. I take this time to congratulate her on this high honor and thank her for her lifetime of service to the place we both call home.

REMEMBERING DR. THOMAS F. FREEMAN: EDUCATOR, SCHOLAR, AND LEGENDARY COACH AND TEACHER OF THE ART OF DEBATE

### HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 24, 2020

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Madam Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to Dr. Thomas F. Freeman, who for more than 60 years has been a professor of philosophy at Texas Southern University, which is located in my congressional district.

Dr. Freeman died last week, on Saturday, June 6, 2020, in Houston, Texas at the age of 100 years old but forever young.

In addition to being an educator and scholar of the first rank, Dr. Freeman was world renowned as the legendary coach and teacher of the art of forensic debate and who helped shape the lives of countless young people who were his students, including the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and the late Congresswoman Barbara Jordan, who once held the seat I now hold.

Dr. Freeman's tools were the spoken word. His canvas was the minds of the brilliant and talented young African Americans seeking a higher education.

A prodigy himself, Dr. Freeman graduated from Virginia Union University at the age of 18 and went on to become a professor at Virginia Union University before his 30th birthday.

He would later receive degrees from Andover Newton Theological School; Harvard University; Chicago Divinity School; the University of Vienna in Austria, and the University of Liberia in Africa.

In 1949, Dr. Freeman was among a group of accomplished academics of color hired by Texas Southern University (TSU).

That same year he held a debate in his TSU logic class using his own undergraduate experience as a guide.

Debate is defined as a contention by words or arguments; or as a formal discussion of a motion before a deliberative body according to the rules of parliamentary procedure; or a regulated discussion of a proposition between two matched sides.

But to Dr. Freeman, it was much more than a contest; it was a way of life.

Dr. Freeman understood, as did Socrates when he said to Glaucon in Book X of the Re-

public that "the contest is great my dear Glaucon, greater than it seems—this contest that concerns becoming good or bad."

Dr. Freeman's success was informed by his passionate belief that strong debate skills translated into a range of life skills that would serve students well in their personal lives and professional careers.

Dr. Freeman's academic roots in moral philosophy and theology came through in his instruction of his debate team students.

Through the art of debate, Dr. Freeman taught what the ancient Greeks called *areté*, which is defined as an "activity of the soul in accord with virtue in a complete life."

As Aristotle explains in the Nicomachean Ethics, happiness comes from exercising the full range of one's vital powers directed toward excellence.

Virtue and excellence and happiness is what Dr. Freeman taught his students and that is why he and they were special.

In 1949, the Texas Southern University students who participated in Dr. Freeman's debate class were so impressed with their experience that they requested that Dr. Freeman form and coach a team.

Dr. Freeman agreed and founded the Texas Southern University debate program which today is world renowned for its skill and for the number of championships won.

Dr. Freeman was internationally known for his debate coaching prowess and for the prominent Americans who studied under his tutelage.

As noted, among them were the late Congresswoman Barbara Jordan and the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr.

The debating skills that young Barbara Jordan developed under Dr. Freeman's tutelage were so formidable that she became the first female to travel with the TSU debate team.

She and her debate partner Otis King participated in and won many awards, including the championship at Baylor University, the first integrated debate match held in the South.

Barbara Jordan went on to become a Texas State Senator and the first Texas African American woman elected to the House of Representatives from my state.

She characterized her experience of learning under his tutelage as having shaped her view of the importance of mastering the skills of debate.

Congresswoman Jordan and Dr. Freeman remained close and upon her death he gave the eulogy at her funeral.

Dr. Freeman's skill as a debate coach came to the attention of Denzel Washington when he sought a model for the role of a debate coach for his role in the critically acclaimed film "The Great Debaters," based on life of Melvin B. Tolson, who formed the Wiley College debate team. The Wiley College debate team defeated the University of Southern California (USC) debate team for the 1935 national championship.

One of the students in Dr. Freeman's class during his tenure as a visiting lecturer at Morehouse University was a young Martin Luther King, Jr.

Dr. Freeman had such an influential effect on him that years later while he and a group of students happened to be in the same restaurant he was surprised when Dr. King approached his table to say hello and reminded him that he had been a student in his Morehouse class and shared with the students how much that experience shaped his life.

Dr. Freeman's contributions to the Texas Southern University Community included serving as Founding Dean of both the Weekend College and the Honors College.

Dr. Freeman worked with then TSU President Granville M. Sawyer to develop the program and serve as its dean.

The Honors College, renamed in his honor as the Thomas F. Freeman Honors College, was developed for academically gifted and motivated students to provide them with the most rigorous and challenging academic regimen.

In 1972, Dr. Freeman was asked by Rice University to join its faculty after it had desegregated.

Dr. Freeman began a 23-year career association with Rice University. As near as anyone recalls, he was the first African American professor to teach at this prestigious university before returning to TSU where he resumed teaching and leading the TSU debate team to countless victories.

The life of Dr. Thomas F. Freeman reminds us all of the impact a great teacher can have in changing the world for the better through his or her students.

Too often a teaching career is viewed by too many as an option taken by those who cannot excel elsewhere.

But those of us who know better know that it is the great teacher that makes it possible for us to succeed anywhere and in any pursuit.

Dr. Freeman was such a teacher.

But as he lived a full and complete life rooted in excellence, virtue, and service, he also was a minister of the gospel, community leader, husband, father, mentor, and a friend to thousands.

It can truly be said of Dr. Freeman that his has been a consequential life.

That is why Dr. Freeman is legendary and why in memory of this great man that I ask the House to observe a moment of silence as a tribute to Dr. Freeman's service to Texas Southern University, to America, and to humanity.

### RECOGNIZING MS. BAILEY DOWLING

### HON. JOHN SHIMKUS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 24, 2020

Mr. SHIMKUS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Ms. Bailey Dowling of St. Joseph-Ogden High School, who was named the 2019–20 Gatorade Illinois Softball Player of the Year.

The award, which recognizes not only outstanding athletic excellence, but also high standards of academic achievement and exemplary character demonstrated on and off the field, distinguishes Bailey as Illinois's best high school softball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Softball Player of the Year award to be announced in June, Bailey joins an elite alumni association of state award-winners in 12 sports.

Ms. Dowling, who won the prestigious award in 2018–19, was one of only two high-school athletes on the 2019 USA Softball Junior Women's National Team that won the U19 World Championships last August. In addition